

MEMO FROM
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GENETICS DEPARTMENT
STANFORD UNIVERSITY
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA

TO:

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~~AUG 10 1970~~

Dear John

I don't pretend any great precision, but I would put the genetic component of the cost of disease at closer to 50 than 25%. I would not say that we overtly spend a quarter of our GNP on health. But I do think that we lose that proportion of our economic and personal productivity to ill-health, which I would define as the margin between our actual biological performance, and that available to the somatically fittest genotypes.

At that I may still have left out costs attributable to the genetic components of non-medically calculated social failure. What is the cost of a 5% decrement in IQ? Of social pathology related to crime, etc.?

You have stripped my argument down to its fundamentals. What you should criticize me for is the untested assumption that much of the genetic load is mutational rather than polymorphic (heterozygous advantage).

It would be interesting to measure the effect of consanguinity on economic performance as some objective approach to my calculations. Has this come out of the Iceland pedigrees?

I do not associate myself with G&T's calculations, and have made no reference to them since my article of Jan. 3. The Star's allusion to my support is misleading at point 1, but correctly amplified at point 2, so I don't think they would respond to a complaint. I probably should write about it again. I don't think my recent Post article exaggerated the costs of radiation exposure, nor are they inherently intolerable, but we can hardly dismiss them as is implied by the retrenchment of research.

Sincerely,